

Accountability Report 2014–2015

Communications Nova Scotia ◀



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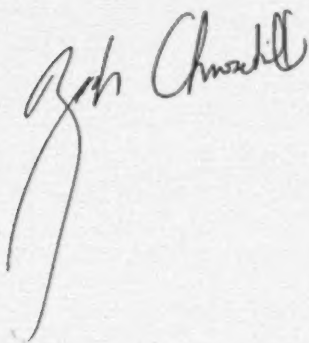
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Accountability Statement

The accountability report of Communications Nova Scotia for the year ended March 31, 2015 is prepared pursuant to the Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against Communications Nova Scotia's Statement of Mandate for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the Communications Nova Scotia outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgements and opinions by Communications Nova Scotia management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Communications Nova Scotia management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Communications Nova Scotia 2014-2015 Statement of Mandate.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zach Churchill', with a large, stylized initial 'Z'.

Hon. Zach Churchill
Minister of Communications Nova Scotia

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tracey Taweel', with a large, stylized initial 'T'.

Tracey Taweel
Associate Deputy Minister of Communications Nova Scotia

Message from the Minister

Changing technology continues to open new opportunities for citizens to engage directly with government. CNS remains dedicated to increasing awareness, understanding, and public engagement in government programs, process, and decisions, and has taken steps over the past year to evolve with the ever-changing expectations of the public in an increasingly digital and online world.

CNS has worked closely with the departments of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services to move towards greater standardization across government's online sites, with the ultimate goal of better accessibility and usability for individuals. There was also an increased focus on evaluating and tracking web activity to better understand how people are using the province's sites, and how better to serve them.

Through the support of CNS, departments have been able to better interact with the public over social media platforms. Implementing the government's first social media plan has provided a framework to build on with measurable results.

Like all departments, CNS is focused providing the necessary level of service in the most fiscally responsible manner possible. This year, CNS continued its work to provide evaluation and accountability around all communications activity across government. Through strategic planning, CNS will be even better able to coordinate and allocate its resources to best support government and serve the public.

Individuals are connected and communicating in new and exciting ways, and expect their government to do the same. CNS will support all departments as they continue to adapt to meet the needs of citizens now, and in the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Zach Churchill". The signature is stylized, with a large, sweeping initial "Z" and a long, thin vertical stroke extending downwards from the end of the name.

Hon. Zach Churchill
Minister of Communications Nova Scotia

Financial Results

Communications Nova Scotia			
	2014-2015 Estimate	2014-2015 Actuals	2015-2016 Estimate
Program & Service Area	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)
Gross Departmental Expenses:			
Office of the Associate Deputy Minister	1907	1210	1216
Client Services	503	591	626
Communications Planning	574	1000	1074
Communication Services	1346	1047	1241
Marketing	3162	2120	2661
Total Gross Departmental Expenses	7492	5968	6818
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Recoveries	215	491	454
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	97.8	104.0	90.5

Note:

Estimates/Actuals: All estimates/actuals should be rounded to the nearest thousand.

FTE's for Departments: Rounding should follow what appears in 1.1 of the Estimates book.

FTE's for PSO's: In accordance with what appears in the Nova Scotia Estimates Supplementary Detail, all FTE information should be rounded to the nearest tenth.

Strategic Outcomes

Communications Nova Scotia is a key player in the development and distribution of vital information about the priorities, programs and services of government. The services CNS offers help to ensure Nova Scotians are aware of government initiatives and opportunities available to them.

The following strategic outcomes will guide the agency's work in 2014-2015.

Strategic Outcome 1

Nova Scotians are aware of government priorities, programs and services and how to access them.

Strategic Outcome 2

Government departments and offices are compliant with and aware of policies and guidelines under the legislated authority of CNS.

Strategic Outcome 3

Effective delivery of communications and marketing expertise to government.

Measuring our Performance

Strategic Outcome 1

Nova Scotians are aware of government priorities, programs and services and how to access them.

Outcome	Target	Actual Measure	Notes	Future Considerations
Awareness scores and research results on identified government priorities and programs, using most appropriate methodology	Increased awareness of government programs and services and how to access them, compared to baseline set in early 2014	Select Nova Scotia 36% of respondents had heard of Select Nova Scotia (on par with earlier results) <i>Source: Atlantic Quarterly Winter 2015</i> 79% residents believe that buy local programs are important to them personally, similar to earlier findings Almost all (94%) Nova Scotians believe buy local programs are important to the provincial economy (a 4% increase over Summer 2013) District Health Authority consolidation 65% of residents were aware of the merger (an increase from 51% baseline) <i>Source: Atlantic Quarterly Winter 2015</i>	Facilitated public opinion research for a number of key government priorities (Select Nova Scotia, District Health Authority consolidation, tax review and pre-budget consultation, higher education research). Insights were used to inform communication strategy development and program and policy decisions Typically, awareness scores increase immediately following announcements	Continue to foster a culture of evaluation and develop and implement post-campaign evaluation Consider ways to sustain awareness of key priorities following announcement

		Awareness of NS funding agencies A majority of Nova Scotians (62%) were aware of ERDT; 44% reported hearing about NSBI; 35% were aware of Innovacorp. (baseline measure) 44% had heard of the OneNS Report When asked to rate the major recommendations of the report, reforming municipal government was ranked most important, followed by new business start-ups and increasing post-secondary education and training. Increasing immigration had the lowest ranking. Source: quantitative survey August 2014		
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Outcome	Target	Actual Measure	Notes	Future Considerations
Update novascotia.ca in partnership with Service Nova Scotia and CIO to provide a citizen centered online presence for	Issue RFP for user experience and content strategy development Implement Phase 1 of RFP – homepage	n/a n/a	There was a delay in the re-development of government's online presence. Before the project could begin, there was a need to identify and adopt a web development	Drupal identified as the web development platform standard for government.

government	and priority sites by end of fiscal 2014		platform standard for government. This work took the majority of the fiscal year. The project was further paused due to government alignment activities.	Director, Internet Strategy role developed
Appropriate web analytics measures on identified government priority sites	District Health Authority consolidation	There were two peaks to the People-Centred Health Care mini site: December 12, 2014 – 17,607 page views (announcement of Vice-President designates) January 30, 2015 - 13,883 page views (due to newsletter sent to Healthcare workers announcing remaining members of executive Nova Scotia District Health Authority leadership team)	Web based communications most commonly used by health care workers. Health care workers said new organizational structure deemed critically important information and 43% reported it was the most important topic (<i>Source: quantitative survey of health care workers, October 2014</i>) The DHA transition mini website went through three name changes in 2014-2015 - Putting Patients First (April 1 June 4, 2014); Patient-Centred Health (June 4 to 26, 2014); and current site People-Centred Health Care.	Internet Strategy team restructuring
	Select Nova Scotia	53% increase in overall web traffic in 2014-2015 over previous year 30% of these were new visitors to the site		

		Peaks in traffic during Home for the Holidays campaign	Increased activity relates to in-market campaigns	
	Novascotia.ca	External page views – 1,149,700 Unique visitors – 825,293 Average time spent on site – 3:49 minutes		
	Education Review	Education and Early Childhood Development saw its main page visits more than double in the two days following the release of Nova Scotia's Action Plan for Education (spiking from an average of 1,500 to about 3,700 views).		

Outcome	Target	Actual Measure	Notes	Future Considerations
Increased engagement with Nova Scotians on government social media platforms	20% increase (51 from 31%) of respondents who report gov't is responsive on social media as compared to baseline (February 2014)	n/a Research project was delayed to June 2015 due to operational pressures and to expand research scope to include citizen online activity and expectation of government online beyond social media.	June 2015 – quantitative survey in field to evaluate public opinion and engagement with government online activity (web, social and advertising) Established an online evaluation project team to continue implementation of online evaluation to include social media, online advertising and online (Google Analytics)	Key announcements should be identified as such in advance and tracked accordingly. Departments should also be tracking and measuring their own key announcements.
	15% increase (73% from 58%) of respondents report government social media is meeting their needs/expectations as compared to baseline (February 2014)			
	Increase followers of key government social media accounts	Twitter (@nsgov) is 26,890 up from 15,000 in February 2014 Facebook has 7,640 likes, up from 1,750 in February 2014 Education and Early Childhood Development: 5,562 twitter	Users more likely to retweet content that included photos and links to websites vs statistics Facebook comments have an impact. For example, burning safe map on DNR website changed as a result of citizen comments.	Tweet more photos. Ensure announcements and events include compelling photography that tells our story. Online advertising has significantly increased citizen feedback. Department communications staff are responding to this feedback with support.

		followers up from 4,200 in Sept 2014 Select Nova Scotia: 35% increase in Facebook likes 15% increase in Twitter followers (over previous year) Strategy implemented 100% of departmental communications plan templates include a section for social media strategy Social media audit conducted; 50% accounts audited with changes to be made	Some Select Nova Scotia Facebook posts have reached in excess of 30,000 people	
	Develop and implement social media strategy			Social media campaigns and advertising buys may warrant creating individual plans and measures. New media monitoring RFP will allow CNS to explore social media service providers re: evaluation
	Attain at least 3 unique re-tweets of key announcements-related content every month	Almost all announcements sent from @nsgov reached target. On average 10 to 12 retweets achieved.	Media may not retweet government content, but will take content and tweet via their own account.	The Twitter dashboard and bit.ly (or comparable tools) can also be used to track retweets and link clicks.

Outcome	Target	Actual Measure	Notes	Future Considerations
Implement appropriate processes and guidelines for news release delivery to ensure accurate and timely information delivery	Finalize and implement news release database	Finalized and 75% implemented	Ongoing testing and feedback continues. Target for full implementation is summer 2015	Explore capability for use off-site.
	Streamlined and more efficient method of news release preparation, with ability to add photos, audio/video and posting features to government homepage	100% of posting to homepage includes photos. Video used four times Total interactions with Home Page feature – 12,269 Top interactions: Throne Speech, Cabinet swearing in and Budget.	Mediaserv team assumed responsibility for posting to homepage Premier's State of the Province and Honouring Viola Desmond on Heritage Day also popular.	
		When provided, video was launched 694 times Photos were clicked most often, twice as often as either the "read more" link or the headline		Having video and photo content correlated with increased interaction with content
	Meet recommendation from the AG report to record approvals of news releases Error Free, accurate news releases delivered to media within deadline	Process implemented; 100% of releases have filed approvals 60% reduction in corrections issued compared to previous fiscal year	Program/department staff responsible for content in news release	Approvals will be documented into new system once implemented

Strategic Outcome 2

Government departments and offices are compliant with and aware of policies and guidelines under the legislated authority of CNS.

Outcome	Target	Actual Measure	Notes	Future Considerations
Update key existing policies/guidelines within the purview of CNS	Complete review of existing policies and guidelines and identify requirements	Policy review conducted, identified required updates and potential development of new policies (copyright, sponsorship, accessibility)		Further policy updates and creation of identified requirements to take place 2015-2016.
Identify and develop new policies required in support of amendments to Section 251B of the Public Service Act (i.e. sponsorship, copyright)		Social Media Policy and Guidelines updated		
		Implemented Advertising Policy		Will implement process to identify and capture any non-compliance 2015-2016
		French Language Services		
		Quantitative research with four groups of interest - French Language Service Coordinators, Acadian Affairs staff, CNS, and a group of Crown Corp, Agencies and Public Institutions.	Verbatims provided suggest the location is not so much the issue in terms of finding the Guidelines, but rather building awareness of the need to use them and when to use them	Review French Language Services policy and guidelines and revise as required (March 2016).
		Awareness of the French-language Communications		Develop and implement comm plan to increase familiarity and understanding of when to apply guidelines.

		Guidelines is high at approximately 80% or higher While awareness was high, familiarity was much lower, particularly for the CNS Staff and the Crown Corps. Approximately 70% of the Acadian Affairs, Crown Corps and FLSCs say they know where to find the guidelines. The figure for CNS staff is lower at 47%.		
Develop and implement accessible information guidelines and policy	Develop project vision, charter and work plan by June 2014 Develop guidelines and policy by October 2014 Implement policy and guidelines by January 2015.	Committee established; PSC consultant led broad planning exercise Draft plan developed with revised timelines for implementation in 2015-2016	Timelines impacted by creation of a Minister's Panel on Accessibility tasked to develop legislation; Accessibility Chair represented CNS on the panel. Panel report is complete. CNS work has resumed.	Panel work confirmed CNS work will align with intent of new legislation and subsequent standards.

Outcome	Target	Actual Measure	Notes	Future Considerations
Develop and implement new processes for consolidated procurement and project	Develop planning process by June 2014 Implement centralized procurement Fall	All image services projects now managed by Project Services. Creative Services	Translation Services reviewing project management processes for integration with Project Services as	

management functions at CNS	2014 Begin to meet recommendations from the AG report	projects increasingly managed by Project Services, expect full Project Services management by Fall 2015 Implemented process review with Business Analysts from ISD to capture required changes in processes - ongoing	appropriate Continue to conduct process review to inform development and implementation of new consolidated processes.	
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Outcome	Target	Actual Measure	Notes	Future Considerations
Consistent use of government Visual Identity Program (brand standards)	Number of exemptions granted for using unique identifier vs government Visual Identity Program	Finalized and implemented VIP standards. Ongoing management of the identity exemption process to capture, evaluate and eliminate individual identifiers. Results: Number of logo exemption requests – 31 Number of logos approved for exemption – 21 (most approved due to quasi-judicial nature or commercial-orientation) Number of logos denied exemption – 4 Pending review – 6 (all with DHW; determining consolidation impacts)	Developed and implemented education program to increase awareness and understanding about brand, identity management and visual platform as it relates to the new legislation and advertising policy and guidelines. All SMT tables throughout gov't reached.	

Outcome	Target	Actual Measure	Notes	Future Considerations
Government advertising will be booked through CNS	100% advertising booked through CNS	Achieved Implemented advertising policy Four campaigns fell under the Significant Advertising category: Workzone Safety (TIR); Select Nova Scotia Holiday 2014 (Dept of Agriculture and CNS); Heating Assistance Rebate Program (SNS); Problem Gambling Helpline – Take 5 (DHW) Developed first advertising annual report to meet recommendation from the AG report	Under the Public Service Act, CNS is responsible for centralized delivery of advertising services. This includes Operational (<\$25,000) and Significant Advertising (>\$25,000).	Non-compliance form will be developed for departments booking advertising outside of process

Strategic Outcome 3

Effective delivery of communications and marketing expertise to government.

Outcome	Target	Actual Measure	Notes	Future Considerations
Assess awareness of and satisfaction with CNS services, processes, policies and guidelines via government-wide Client Satisfaction Survey	Increased awareness of and satisfaction with products and services over baseline (2010)	n/a	Client survey did not proceed due to ongoing changes in operational processes	
	Establish baseline awareness of policies and guidelines under the legislated authority of CNS	n/a		

Outcome	Target	Actual Measure	Notes	Future Considerations
Develop and implement a new photo library with improved access and increased images	Develop improved photo library by August 2014 and implement by September 2014	Visual library improvements 100% complete Anecdotal client feedback positive regarding improved access and photo availability	Further discussions with departments ongoing regarding specific photo requirements	

Outcome	Target	Actual Measure	Notes	Future Considerations
Develop marketing communications plans for all significant government initiatives that include measurable communications objectives.	Marketing communications plans developed to support government communications plan.	Completed for significant campaigns	Four campaigns fell under the Significant Advertising category: Workzone Safety (TIR); Select Nova Scotia Holiday 2014 (Dept of Agriculture and CNS); Heating Assistance Rebate Program (SNS); Problem Gambling	Evaluation practices to be reviewed during Good to Great refresh
	Create benchmark measures upon which campaigns will be evaluated.	Appropriate benchmarks are included in each brief		

			Helpline – Take 5 (DHW)	
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Outcome	Target	Actual Measure	Notes	Future Considerations
Develop, implement and evaluate annual communications plans for all client departments.	Develop annual comm plans for all departments	100% of departments developed and implemented annual communications plans by Communications Directors.	Plans reviewed at group meetings to ensure day to day work linked to annual comm plan	
	Review that annual comm plans are connected to the overall government communications plan	Managing Directors reviewed 100% of plans.	Evaluation of plans in major departments is completed as plans for 2015-2016 are developed.	Set expectation for 2 to 4 scheduled check-ins throughout the year with Managing Directors, Deputies and Ministers on annual comm plan to ensure strategy and results are meeting objectives.
	Establish priority comm plans that will be implemented throughout the year and evaluate quarterly			

Appendix A

Annual Report under Section 18 of the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

The Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labor Board.

A Wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets
- c) an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment, or
- d) directing or counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing

The following is a summary of disclosures received by Communications Nova Scotia.

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2014-2015
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	n/a
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	n/a